

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 009100
ORIGIN OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 HEW-04 CU-04
EB-08 /059 R

DRAFTED BY OES/ENP/EN:WJWALSH,III:SRS
APPROVED BY OES/ENP/EN:DRKING
NEA/INS:ATHIBAULT
EUR/SOV:PHUGHES
EUR/SOV:WEDGAR (SUBS)
NIH/IPSC:BBLOOD
IO/HDC:EEDWARDS (INFO)
EUR/WE:JDOBBINS (INFO)
CU/WE:ERONHOVDE (INFO)
EUR/NE:JSHUMATE (INFO)

-----001836 130116Z /64

P R 122238Z JAN 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY
USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 009100

FOR MTN GENEVA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TA SENV

SUBJECT:INDIAN BAN ON EXPORT OF MONKEYS

REFERENCE: NEW DELHI 568

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1. BACKGROUND: INDIA EXPORTS APPROXIMATELY 20,000 RHESUS MONKEYS A YEAR FOR BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH PURPOSES. THE US IMPORTS ABOUT 12,000 OF THEM FOR ITS RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS. THE RHESUS MONKEY IS THE ONLY SUITABLE ONE FOR MANY RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS SUCH AS TESTING POLIO VACCINE. ONLY 10PCOF THE US REQUIREMENT CAN NOW BE MET BY MONKEYS RAISED IN THE US BUT AT A COST TWICE THAT OF IMPORTING THEM.

2. BAN ON MONKEY EXPORT: IN DECEMBER, 1977, THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ISSUED A DIRECTIVE TO THE CONTROLLER OF EXPORTS WHICH HAS THE EFFECT OF BANNING THE EXPORT OF RHESUS MONKEYS. NO OFFICIAL REASON WAS STATED FOR THE BAN. HOWEVER, PRESS REPORTS CONNECTED THE BAN WITH TREATMENT OF MONKEYS BY THE US ARMED FORCES RADIO BIOLOGY RESEARCH INSTITUTE. LAST FALL NBC NETWORK NEWS DID A SHORT STORY IN CONNECTION WITH NEUTRON BOMB TESTING THAT SHOWED MONKEYS BEING USED TO DETERMINE THE EFFECTS OF RADIATION. DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE HAS STATED THAT IT WILL NOT USE ANYMORE MONKEYS IMPORTED FROM INDIA FOR THIS PURPOSE.

3. CONCERN ABOUT THE BAN HAS BEEN VOICED BY THE BRITISH, FRENCH AND WEST GERMANS AMONG OTHERS. THE USSR IMPORTS 3300 MONKEYS UNDER A TRADE AGREEMENT WITH INDIA. IT IS NOT KNOWN WHETHER EXPORTS TO THE USSR ARE AFFECTED BY THE BAN.

4. CONCERNED SCIENTISTS FROM SEVERAL GOVERNMENTS APPROACHED DR. MAHLER, DIRECTOR GENERAL, WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, IN REGARD TO THE PROBLEM. ON BEHALF OF THE DG, WHO, DR. M.R.N. PRASAD FORMER ZOOLOGY PROFESSOR DELHI UNIVERSITY AND NOW WHO STAFF MEMBER IN GENEVA IS TRAVELING TO NEW DELHI JANUARY 12 WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF DETERMINING OFFICIAL REASON FOR BAN ON MONKEY EXPORTS AND WHAT CAN BE CONFIDENTIAL

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DONE TO HAVE BAN LIFTED. FYI: WHO REGIONAL DIRECTOR IN NEW DELHI HAD BEEN ASKED BY DG MAHLER TO BRING REPORT ON MONKEY BAN TO EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING NOW CONVENED IN GENEVA BUT REPORTED ONLY THAT IT WAS A DIFFICULT ISSUE OF GREAT POLITICAL SENSITIVITY. END FYI.

5. USG STRONGLY SUPPORTS WHO INITIATIVE AND WILL AWAIT OUTCOME OF PRASAD VISIT PRIOR TO CONSIDERING FURTHER ACTION.

6. ACTION REQUESTED FOR GENEVA: PLEASE REPORT ANY FURTHER INFO ON THIS ISSUE TO DEPARTMENT (ATTN: OES).

7. ACTION REQUESTED FOR MOSCOW: PLEASE TRY TO ASCERTAIN TERMS OF GOI-USSR TRADE AGREEMENT OF WHICH MONKEY BUSINESS IS PART AND LET US KNOW WHETHER EXPORT OF MONKEYS IS BEING CURTAILED AND WHEN.

8. ACTION REQUESTED FOR NEW DELHI: IN VIEW OF APPARENT SCOPE OF EMBARGO QUOTED REFTEL WOULD APPRECIATE ANY INFO ABOUT GOI SHIPMENTS OF MONKEYS TO USSR UNDER THE TERMS OF TRADE AGREEMENT CITED ABOVE. CHRISTOPHER

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